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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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July 22, 2020

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Subject: Executive Order to Promote American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing regarding your Executive Order Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth, and a response you received from the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council on May 8, 2020.

The regional fisheries management councils were established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to provide local level input in developing appropriate management strategies for the nation's fisheries resources. As part of this process, the management councils include representation from each State within the council's jurisdiction. I am honored to serve on the Western Pacific Council as the designated state official for Hawai'i.

In response to your Executive Order, a letter was submitted by Kitty Simonds, Executive Director and Archie Taotasi Soliai, Chair, of the Western Pacific Council, ostensibly on behalf of all sixteen members of the Council. The letter was written and transmitted without prior discussion or consent of the Council members, and I am writing to convey that the State of Hawai'i does not agree with the letter's assertions regarding fishing restrictions in the Papahānaumokuākea and Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monuments.

As Chair of the Council's Hawai'i Archipelago and Pacific Remote Islands Area Ecosystems Standing Committee, I can attest that the fishing restrictions for the monuments are a key component of the proper care and management of the protected objects as identified by Presidential Proclamations 8031, 8336, 9173, and 9478. Additionally, weakening protections by allowing commercial extraction would run counter to the carefully considered outcome of an extensive public process.

Based on significant public input, which included consultations with elected officials, Native Hawaiians, commercial fishers and related industries, scientists, conservationists, and other stakeholders, both monuments' boundaries were carefully drawn to best protect the resources and preserve popular fishing grounds for recreational, subsistence, and commercial fishers. This process has proved successful: recent analysis published in the journal *Nature Communications*

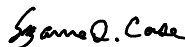
demonstrated that the designation and expansion of both Papahānaumokuākea and the Pacific Remote Islands Monuments had no negative impact on the Hawaii-based longline fleet.

It is also important to note that this fishery is a quota-based system, not place dependent, and therefore large marine monuments like Papahānaumokuākea and the Pacific Remote Islands can be created without decreasing annual catch. In fact, the Hawai‘i-based longline fleet had been thriving with record catch levels. Any economic hardship currently experienced by the fleet is a direct impact from the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the resulting lack of demand in the market. It is not that the fleet cannot fish in the monument areas, but rather that it is currently too costly for the fleet to fish at all. Contrary to the assertions made in the letter from Ms. Simonds and Mr. Soliai, changes to current fishing restrictions in the monuments will have no impact in promoting economic growth for the industry.

The public processes also provided an opportunity for Hawai‘i residents and beyond to highlight the strong scientific, historic, and cultural case for the monuments. Both areas protect unique marine ecosystems that safeguard thousands of species, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. There is a wealth of scientific evidence regarding the conservation benefit of protected areas like the monuments, including their role in bolstering commercially important fish stocks outside a protected area’s boundary through the “spillover” effect.

The State of Hawai‘i appreciates your thoughtful consideration of this information.

Sincerely,



Suzanne D. Case  
Chairperson

CC: United States Senator Brian Schatz  
Dr. Peter Navarro, Director, White House Office of Trade and Manufacturing  
Chris Chaffee, Associate Director, Office of Public Liaison  
Joseph Russo, President Special Assistant/Business Outreach Director, WH Public Liaison Office  
Chris Oliver, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
Mike Tosatto, Regional Administrator, Pacific Islands Regional Office, NOAA Fisheries